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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 716  
By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor Mr. Erlewood Barden of Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee should honor those estimable persons who through their professional and personal endeavors are credits to their respective families and communities, and to this state; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding person is Mr. Erlewood Barden of Memphis, whose outstanding public service through years of hard work, diligence, and dedication has distinguished him as an invaluable servant of our great state; and

WHEREAS, born on September 28, 1921, the son of a barber/small businessman in Florala, Alabama, Mr. Erlewood Barden was the youngest child of four children, and grew up with three older sisters; before the Depression, Erlewood's father moved the family to Orlando, Florida where Erlewood grew up during the Depression, when tough times were even tougher than normal; and

WHEREAS, an entrepreneur at an early age, Erlewood Barden started his own lawn care business as a young boy and worked in the hotels along the beach; some of his more

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enjoyable pastimes while growing up in Orlando, were swimming in the Atlantic Ocean and driving motorcycles and cars on the beach; and

WHEREAS, after graduating high school, Erlewood moved to Memphis, and after several years of working and attending night school, he met Miss Mary Jane McIntosh, and fell in love; the couple was wed in 1941; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Barden joined the United States Army as a newlywed during the same year he and his bride were married; he bravely served as a sergeant in the European theater during World War II in the fight for freedom and equality; and

WHEREAS, an innovative and progressive thinker who has never shied away from a hard day's work, Mr. Barden's first job after having served his nation during the war, was working at the Memphis Army Depot, while once again attending night school; he received his education in safety engineering and gained employment with International Harvester as a safety engineer, while raising his young family; and

WHEREAS, while still employed at International Harvester, Erlewood started raising hogs as a "sideline business"; the story has been told that in an effort to fatten his hogs for market, he picked up some leftover cookies that had been thrown out from a nearby bakery and fed the sweet confections to his hogs. The hogs ate the cookies voraciously and soon thereafter became sick, and by the following day many were dying. Erlewood loaded up his hogs, and quickly drove them all to market, in order to rid him of those sweet-toothed porcines and any possible financial losses. It has been jokingly said by Mr. Barden that in Memphis the next week the sausage all tasted a little like vanilla cookies; and

WHEREAS, quite the astute businessman, Mr. Erlewood Barden also had an interest in another business, Precast Concrete; he left International Harvester and began employment with the White Stone Company in 1951; several years later, the owner of White Stone Company died, and Mr. Barden stepped up to the challenge and assumed the management of the business; and

WHEREAS, under his stalwart guidance, the White Stone Company became a leader in the precast concrete industry, and a giant industry in the Mid-South, as buildings all over the region were using White Stone's precast concrete; and

WHEREAS, his dedication and expertise extends beyond his business interests; Mr. Barden has been working with the local Democratic Party ever since he moved to Memphis after high school; Mr. Barden's mentor and friend, Mr. Bert Bates, was a leader in the local Democratic Party and an associate of the renowned Memphis political leader, Mr. E.H. Crump. Mr. Barden was a natural-born salesman with a working knowledge of politics, and was thus a valuable asset to the local Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, Erlewood Barden worked with Mr. Crump and Mr. Bates in the 1940s and early 50s in several state and local campaigns over the years; he has supported Frank Clement, Buford Ellington, Ray Blanton, Jake Butcher, Ned Ray McWherter, his good friend Ralph Waldo Emerson, and many other Democratic candidates too numerous to mention; and

WHEREAS, he generously donated his wisdom and talents by serving with acumen and alacrity as a member of the Industrial Development Commission under Governors Clement and Ellington, as a member of the Memphis Harbor Authority under Mayor Bill Ingram, and as a supporter of the Tennessee Democratic Legislative Caucus; and

WHEREAS, a great lover of the environment, Mr. Barden also served with probity as a member of the Shelby County Conservation Board for over twenty-two years and as the Director of the State Conservation Commission under the appointment of Governor Ned McWherter; Erlewood also lent his many leadership abilities as one of the principle organizers of the Tennessee State Parks Foundation, which is currently known as the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Barden is a staunch supporter of Tennessee state government and is forceful and outspoken in sharing his concerns and ideas for the improvement of conservation efforts in Tennessee and the protection and nurturing of environment with this state's leaders.

He is a true Tennessean in the most positive sense of the word, always performing with the utmost integrity, probity, and industry in everything he undertakes; and

WHEREAS, he has worked assiduously to ensure that Tennessee's state parks are kept open for the people of this great state; and

WHEREAS, his many honors and accolades aside, Mr. Barden is most appreciative of the love and companionship that he shares with his devoted wife, Mary Jane. He is the proud father of five children, Charlotte, John, Robert, William, and Richard, and the loving grandfather of fourteen grandchildren, Shayne and Gretchen Weyker, and Scott, Jason, Shannon, Darrin, Billy, Nancy, Eric, Justin, Heather, Allison, Courtney, and Melanie Barden; and

WHEREAS, seldom does a gentleman of Mr. Barden's stature walk among us, and it is fitting that he should be specially recognized for his life of purpose and commitment; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we recognize and honor an exemplary Tennessean, Mr. Erlewood Barden, for his commitment and dedication to the citizens of this state, as we salute his outstanding character and his many good works and accomplishments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.